

## JAMES BOUNDS

### PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR USS OKLAHOMA BB 37

JAMES C BOUNDS

BORN JULY 26 1922 IN BOUNDS COMMUNITY BIG CREEK MS. JOINED NAVY 7U AUG 1940, AND WENT THROUGH TRAINING AT SAN DIEGO CA. ON DEC 7 1941 I WAS IN AFTER STEERING STATION DOWN ON 1<sup>st</sup> PLATFORM, WHICH WAS THE QUARTERMASTERS LIVING SPACE. I WAS ABOUT READY TO START CLEANING THE DECK WHEN WORD WAS PASSED OVER (IMC) "JAP PLANES ATTACKING PEARL HARBOR THIS IS NO SHIT" I KNEW THAT WAS NO DRILL. THERE WERE SEVEN (7) QUARTERMASTERS AND ONE (1) 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS ELECTRICIAN MATE IN THE COMPARTMENT. WE PREPARED FOR A NORMAL GENERAL QUARTERS - ALL KINDS OF THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN. THE SHIP STARTED LISTING TO PORT, LOCKERS BEGAN FALLING OVER, SPARE PARTS BOXES BROKE LOOSE FROM THEIR FITTINGS, THEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT. NO EMERGENCY BATTLE LANTERNS CAME ON. WE HAD ONE FLASHLIGHT AND I THINK IT BELONGED TO THE ELECTRICIAN MATE. IT DIDN'T LAST VERY LONG. THE SHIP LISTED TO AN ANGLE OF ONE HUNDRED FIFTY ONE DEGREES (151). WATER STARTED COMING IN THE COMPARTMENT, WE USED CLOTHES, BLANKETS AND EVERYTHING WE COULD FIND TO PLUG UP THE VENTS. IT WAS A HOPELESS CASE. WE WOULD STOP LEAKS IN ONE AREA, AND IT WOULD BREAK OUT SOMEWHERE ELSE. SLOWLY THE WATER BEGAN RISING AFTER THE SHIP SETTLED IN THE MUD

WE TWO WRENCHES, ONE LARGE AND ONE ADJUSTABLE WRENCH FOR MAN HOLE COVERS. WE TOOK TURNS BEATING ON THE BULKHEAD. SOME WERE SENDING OUT S.O.S. SIGNALS. YOU COULD HEAR NOISES AND SOUNDS BUT IT'S HARD TO JUDGE LOCATION UNDERWATER. THE WATER CAME UP ABOVE OUR WAIST AND THE ONLY THING THAT STOPPED IT FROM FILLING THE COMPARTMENT WAS AIR PRESSURE. YOU COULD HEAR EACH OTHER BREATHING. LATER ON THE RESCUE TEAM CUT THROUGH TANKS AND VOIDS ABOVE US. THEY SEEM TO KNOW WHERE THE MANHOLE COVERS WERE. I BELIEVE WE UNDOGGED THE COVER FROM INSIDE. AIR PRESSURE WAS HEAVY. I THINK WE MADE IT OUT JUST IN TIME, THE COMPARTMENT FILLED UP WITH WATER FAST. WE WERE TRAPPED THERE BETWEEN THIRTYTWO AND THIRTY SIX HOURS. GOT OUT MONDAY EVENING DEC 8. WAS SENT TO HOSPITAL SHIP SOLACE OVERNIGHT. THAT WAS THE FIRST LEGAL SHOT OF WHISKEY I HAD IN THE NAVY. THE NEXT DAY WE WERE SENT TO NAVAL STATION. SOME OF US WERE ASSIGNED TO USS HELENA CL 50.

THERE WERE FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY NINE (429) SAILORS AND MARINES KILLED ON OKLAHOMA 7 DEC 1941. I AM NOT SURE OF THE NUMBER WOUNDED. ACCOUNTS VARY ON TORPEDO HITS. JAPANESE CLAIM TWELVE (12) HITS. US NAVY SAYS SEVEN (7) HOW EVER THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THERE WERE TWO ADDITIONAL HITS ABOVE THE AMERICAN COUNT. ACCORDING TO MILITARY ILLUSTRATORS AND PRINTERS OF HAWAII COPU WRIGHT 1990. I WAS ON THE USS HELENA CL-50 FOR OVER A YEAR. WAS SUNK ABOARD HER ON MORNING OF JULY 6 1943 IN THE BATTLE OF KULA GULF. WAS RESCUED ABOUT FOUR (4) HOURS LATER BY USS NICHOLAS DD-449, BUT THAT IS THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER STORY

s/ JAMES C BOUNDS

NOTE: COPY OF SHIPS SERVED ON ENCLOSED

AFTER THINKING LATER ABOUT BEING IN AFT STEERING COMPARTMENT. IT SEEMED LIKE BEING IN A BIG BLACK DAMP COFFIN WAITING TO SUFFOCATE. THERE WASN'T ANY WAY TO GET OUT, AND YOU COULD HEAR EACH OTHER BREATHING. OF COURSE I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A REAL COFFIN YET!

JIM BOUNDS: 6-20-2003

Went into boot camp in San Diego. Joined Navy on August 7, 1940. Born in Mississippi. Got out of high school in June, turned 18 in July, joined Navy in August. Signed up in Mississippi, sworn in in New Orleans. Took a train to San Diego. Boarded the Okie in Long Beach. Took the destroyer USS Summers, he thinks DD-385, from San Diego to Long Beach. First boarded the Okie sometime in October, 1940.

Went to Hawaii in late 1940. Part of BatDivOne from the getgo. His brother was on the Idaho from BatDivThree. About July of 1941. Suddenly his brother went to the east coast.

During the week prior to the attack they were running darkened ships. Fired the guns.

Traded garbage cans with the Arizona. During the collision with the Arizona he was standing the watch. He was the designated quartermaster striker. Was at the inquiry.

Passed the word collision amidships. Bounced side to side. Just kissed each other. About three weeks later the Enterprise came over the stern and bent the flagship. He didn't have the watch during this.

Lead helmsman, stand-by helmsman, is the one that brings the ship into port. He remembers going around the island when they came in. Jim recalls that they always came around the island.

This is what Jim and I decided: The Arizona entered the harbor first and went to F-7 because that's probably where Kidd wanted to go; or because she would be receiving the Vestal the next day. The Nevada went to F-8 because she would be changing-out her ammo the next day and needed to be clear on her port side. The Oklahoma was sent alongside the Maryland because that was the only spot left.

Jim did not recall a submarine sighting the week before the attack.

Jim said they were generally out for two weeks at a time.

Kimmel was 32 admirals down on the list.

They got the word for the material inspection while they were at sea. One of the BatDivOne ships was going to be inspected on Friday, but since they came in late, it was canceled. All three of the ships were going to be inspected. Jim thought maybe they planned on starting with the Okie. He had not heard of a sailor being killed in one of the blisters.

Jim went out to Waikiki on Saturday. Jim was normally on the starboard side of the pilot house. Foreman, 2<sup>nd</sup> class quartermaster, was going on leave, he asked Jim if he would help out in after steering to get ready for the inspection. Foreman was in charge of that space. Jim cleaned the space then went ashore. Jim returned to the ship around 1800 on Saturday. On Sunday Jim would go to church by the YMCA, and then ago to the YMCA, change into his bathing suit and go swimming at Waikiki.

Got up about 0630, didn't eat.

When they sounded general quarters he had just gone up to the carpenters shop on the third deck. Quartermasters living space in after stern is on first platform. He had gone up to the carpenters shop to get his bucket, soap, and a swab, so he could clean the deck down below. He had just come down a big shaft and had entered his living compartment in steering aft. More or less on the port side. Only thing aft is the tiller room. Four steering wheels in the compartment.

They did not have a IMC in their compartment. He heard the word to go to general quarters as it was blaring from the carpenter shop above. "This is no shit!"